LISTING OF CLAIMS

1 – 85. (Canceled)

86. (Currently amended) A method for detecting the presence of specific antibodies in experimental or clinical samples, comprising:

a) providing a ubiquitin fusion protein selected from the group consisting of i) a ubiquitin fusion protein comprising ubiquitin fused to a single epitope-containing segment, the epitope-containing segment comprising two or more identical epitopes, ii) a ubiquitin fusion protein comprising ubiquitin fused to two ~~of~~ or more non-contiguous epitope-containing segments, each epitope-containing segment comprising one or more identical ~~or non-identical~~ epitopes, iii) a ubiquitin fusion protein comprising ubiquitin fused to a single epitope-containing segment comprising two or more identical or non-identical epitopes, the epitope-containing segment[s] being fused to the ubiquitin at fusion sites selected ~~form~~ from the group[s] consisting of the C-terminus wherein said fusion site is non-cleavable, the N-terminus ~~and~~ or an internal fusion site and, iv) a ubiquitin fusion protein comprising ubiquitin fused to a single epitope-containing segment comprising one or more identical or non-identical epitopes, the epitope-containing segment being fused to ubiquitin at the C-terminus wherein said fusion site is non-cleavable or the N-terminus of the ~~heat shock~~ ubiquitin protein, wherein one or more epitopes of steps (a)(i) – (a)(iv) are recognized by the antibody to be detected;

b) providing a sample suspected of comprising antibodies reactive with one or more epitopes of the ubiquitin fusion protein, said sample acquired from an experimental or clinical source;

c) forming an incubation mixture comprising the ubiquitin fusion protein of step a) and the sample of step b); and

d) detecting antibodies in the sample of step b) that bind to the epitope or epitopes of the ubiquitin fusion protein of step a).

87 – 100. (Canceled)